TO: Mr. John R. Mollen, Administrator  
Hastings State Hospital  — Chairman, East Metropolitan Mental Health Coordinating Committee  

From: David J. Vail, M. D.  
Medical Director  

Subject: Study of Hastings State Hospital  

Aug. 30, 1965

In the opening meeting of the Legislative Building Committee on Friday, August 27, 1965, Senator Perry, Chairman, asked that the Department of Public Welfare carry out a very thorough study of the Hastings State Hospital, with a particular view to the future building program. If Hastings State Hospital is to be suitably restored, the State will have to invest several million dollars in new buildings. It is obviously important to insure that this investment will be sound.

Questions before us are:

1. Should Hastings be abandoned altogether?

2. Should it be rebuilt in whole or in part? If so, to what size?

3. If rebuilt, should it be to continue as a hospital for the mentally ill, or as reclassified in whole or in part for the mentally retarded?

The questions are very critical. They involve a consideration of the present and future needs of the eastern metropolitan area in regard to services for the mentally ill. The answer to these questions must take into account the needs for the mentally retarded throughout the entire state, and it must take into account efforts such as new community projects, forces which are not presently unpredictable. The study should consider other hospitals. For example:

1. If Hastings State Hospital is abandoned as a psychiatric hospital for the metropolitan area, who will be the capability of this or some other hospital or hospitals to take up the slack?

2. As St. Peter’s district is now less than 240,000 population, might it be more feasible to redistribute St. Peter’s counties among Hastings, Anoka, Waconia, and Becker; reclassify St. Peter’s for mental retardation; and make plans to transfer some of the resident patients to other hospitals?

I raise these additional questions not alone for their content, but to show how really complicated this problem is.

As I have thought about the matter, I am convinced that it will be difficult or even impossible for the Department of Public Welfare itself to carry out really objective studies. Other possibilities are:

1. The Eastern Metropolitan Regional Mental Health Coordinating Committee

2. The Metropolitan St. Paul Hospital Planning Council

3. A private firm, much as Hamilton Associates or the new community mental health group under Maltby, et al.
The Eastern Metropolitan Regional Coordinating Committee is included in virtue of being a purely voluntary association without staff resources to carry out the study itself, though it will be of great value as a beginning point for discussion. The Metropolitan St. Paul Hospital Planning Council might be quite suitable, though possibly unable to extend its inquiry too well into some of the larger and related questions involving mental retardation services, St. Peter State Hospital, etc. A private firm would cost too much; though we could add a modest amount (less than $2,000) from research funds.

I think the National Institute of Mental Health might be a very suitable agency to carry out a survey, as they could be objective, they could command all resources and bring in consultants from all over the country, and I believe they are at work.

Therefore I ask you, as Chairman of the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Coordinating Committee, to bring this letter to the attention of the Committee for discussion and your recommendation to proceed. Furthermore I will contact the National Institute of Mental Health to see how their services are arranged in this type of situation. Also I will send a copy of this note to the Mental Retardation Planning Council, as I do not see the question will interest them.

Sincerely,

Mr. John H. Fregge, Chairman

Mr. Ronald Olson, State Dept. Legislative Building Commission
Mr. Horace Hunt

Mental Health Medical Policy Committee

East Metropolitan Mental Health Coordinating Council

Mental Retardation Planning Council — Members: Mrs. Emily Hinde, Mrs. R Van Hoose, Mr. John Hunt

Dr. John A. Dockery
Mr. Bruce Tracey
Mr. Borden H. Gredt
Mr. William Edsberg